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SECRETARY-GENERAL'S BULLETIN

ORGANIZATION OF THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

The Secretary-General, pursuant to Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/5, entitled "Organization of the Secretariat of the United Nations", and for the purposes of establishing the organizational structure of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, promulgates the following:

Section 1

General provision

The present bulletin shall apply in conjunction with Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/5, entitled "Organization of the Secretariat of the United Nations". The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is also governed by a Statute adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 428 (V), annex).

Section 2

Functions and organization

2.1 The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):[1]

[1] The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 319 A (IV) of 3 December 1949 and its Statute was approved by the Assembly in resolution 428 (V) of 14 December 1950. Subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and decisions and conclusions of the Executive Committee of UNHCR have extended the mandate of the High Commissioner to other groups whose situation and needs are analogous in important respects to those of refugees. According to the Statute, the activities of the Office, with the exception of administrative expenditure relating to the functioning of the

(a) Provides international protection to refugees and seeks permanent solutions to their problems (General Assembly resolution 428 (V), annex, paras. 1 and 8);

(b) Provides assistance to persons repatriating, as well as, if necessary, monitoring their safety and well-being on return (General Assembly resolution 40/118);

(c) Provides humanitarian assistance and protection to persons of concern to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (General Assembly resolution 832 (IX));

(d) Provides, on the basis of specific requests from the Secretary-General or the competent principal organs of the United Nations, and with the consent of the State concerned, humanitarian assistance and protection to internally displaced persons (General Assembly resolution 48/116);

(e) Contributes as a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to the provision, in complex emergencies, of humanitarian assistance coordinated by the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator (General Assembly resolution 46/182).

2.2 The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is divided into organizational units, as described in the present bulletin. In addition, UNHCR operates in the field, covering some 295 offices in 121 countries.

2.3 The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is headed by the High Commissioner, who is assisted by a Deputy High Commissioner and an Assistant High Commissioner. The High Commissioner and the officials in charge of each organizational unit, in addition to the specific functions set out in the present bulletin, perform the general functions applicable to their positions, as set out in Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/5.

Section 3

High Commissioner for Refugees

3.1 The responsibilities, authority and accountability of the High Commissioner are those set out in the Statute of the Office. The High Commissioner is accountable to the Secretary-General for the administration of the Office.

Office, which are to be covered by the United Nations regular budget, shall be financed by voluntary contributions.

An Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1166 (XII) of 26 November 1957 to advise the High Commissioner in the exercise of his/her functions and to approve the use of voluntary funds made available to the High Commissioner. The Executive Committee currently consists of 53 member States.

3.2 The High Commissioner reports annually to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council; the High Commissioner is also entitled to present his or her views before the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies (Statute, para. 11). The High Commissioner is bound by policy directives given him or her by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (Statute, para. 3). Moreover, the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General are to make appropriate arrangements for liaison and consultation on matters of mutual interest (Statute, para. 17).

Section 4

Deputy High Commissioner and Assistant High Commissioner

4.1 The Deputy High Commissioner assists the High Commissioner in the discharge of his or her responsibilities, especially in the areas of administration and management. In the absence of the High Commissioner, the Deputy High Commissioner is responsible for the Office. The Deputy High Commissioner is accountable to the High Commissioner.

4.2 The Assistant High Commissioner assists the High Commissioner in the discharge of his or her responsibilities, especially in the areas of strategic policy and operations. In the absence of both the High Commissioner and the Deputy High Commissioner, the Assistant High Commissioner is responsible for the Office. The Assistant High Commissioner is accountable to the High Commissioner.

Section 5

Executive Office of the High Commissioner

5.1 The Chief of the Executive Office of the High Commissioner is accountable to the High Commissioner.

5.2 The core functions of the Office are as follows:

(a) Keeping the High Commissioner informed on matters requiring his or her attention;

(b) Conveying decisions taken by and other appropriate information from the High Commissioner to units outside the Executive Office;

(c) Servicing the Senior Management Committee;

(d) Preparing the High Commissioner's speeches;

(e) Managing the High Commissioner's correspondence.

Section 6

Liaison Office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Headquarters

6.1 The UNHCR Liaison Office, United Nations Headquarters, is headed by a Director who is accountable to the High Commissioner.

6.2 The core functions of the Liaison Office are as follows:

(a) Representing UNHCR interests and promoting its objectives at United Nations Headquarters and with the United Nations organizations based in New York;

(b) Informing UNHCR headquarters of developments of concern to UNHCR in the legislative and other organs and organizations of the United Nations and within the diplomatic community in New York and providing advice and making recommendations, as appropriate, in the light of those developments;

(c) Coordinating UNHCR contacts with the United Nations Secretariat and other United Nations funds and programmes based in New York.

Section 7

Division of International Protection

7.1 The Division of International Protection, which consists of the Director's Office, the Standards and Legal Advice Section, the Promotion of Refugee Law Unit, the Protection Training and Support Section and the Resettlement and Special Cases Section, is headed by a Director who is accountable to the High Commissioner.

7.2 The core functions of the Division are as follows:

(a) Development, formulation and promulgation of international protection standards and norms;

(b) Ensuring worldwide consistency of approach to protection issues;

(c) Promotion of refugee law and advocacy;

(d) Providing advice in the formulation of strategic and operations policy;

(e) Providing support for protection activities in operations.

Section 8

Inspection and Evaluation Service

8.1 The Inspection and Evaluation Service is headed by a Director, the Inspector, who is accountable to the High Commissioner.

8.2 The core functions of the Service are as follows:

(a) Carrying out comprehensive inspections of UNHCR operations, reviewing those factors, both internal and external, essential to effective management and achievement of organizational objectives;

(b) Undertaking evaluations of operational policies, country operations and regional activities;

(c) Ensuring effective liaison and coordination with the Office of Internal Oversight Services;

(d) Servicing the UNHCR Oversight Committee.

Section 9

Centre for Documentation and Research

9.1 The Centre for Documentation and Research consists of the Policy Research Unit and the Documentation and Information Management Unit. The Head of the Centre is accountable to the High Commissioner through the Assistant High Commissioner.

9.2 The core functions of the Centre are as follows:

(a) Reflecting on and reviewing UNHCR policies on issues directly relevant to the efficient execution of the Office's mandate;

(b) Developing a cooperative framework with the external research community;

(c) Producing the publication The State of the World's Refugees;

(d) Developing and maintaining an authoritative collection of literature and legal and country of origin information relevant to the work of the Office.

Section 10

Public Information Section

10.1 The Public Information Section is headed by a Chief who is accountable to the High Commissioner through the Chief of the Executive Office of the High Commissioner.

10.2 The core functions of the Section are as follows:

(a) Representing the views of the High Commissioner to the media;

(b) Promoting positive and constructive relations with the media and ensuring a consistent and coherent approach in representation of UNHCR to the media;

(c) Promoting public awareness of the plight of refugees and of the aims and activities of UNHCR and generating political, moral and financial support for UNHCR and the refugees it serves through a variety of public information/public affairs activities.

Section 11

Inter-Organization Affairs and Secretariat Service

11.1 The Head of the Inter-Organization Affairs and Secretariat Service is accountable to the High Commissioner through the Deputy High Commissioner. The Head of the Service also serves as the Secretary of the Executive Committee.

11.2 The core functions of the Service are as follows:

(a) Maintaining relations with other intergovernmental organizations;

(b) Liaison with the Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator and providing support to the UNHCR Liaison Office, United Nations Headquarters;

(c) Monitoring developments in relevant intergovernmental governing bodies;

(d) Servicing the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme and its Standing Committee.

Section 12

Operations bureaux

12.1 UNHCR has eight operations bureaux, which manage field activities. Five are headquarters-based (Europe; Americas; Central, East and West Africa; Asia and the Pacific; and Central Asia, South-West Asia, North Africa and Middle East) and three are field-based (Great Lakes of Africa; southern Africa; and former Yugoslavia). Each bureau is headed by a Director who is accountable to the High Commissioner through the Assistant High Commissioner.

12.2 The core functions of an operations bureau, in relation to its geographical area, are as follows:

(a) Advising the High Commissioner on the measures necessary to ensure protection and assistance for refugees and to find durable solutions;

(b) Developing, together with the UNHCR representatives in the field and in coordination with the relevant entities at headquarters, the measures necessary to achieve UNHCR field objectives;

(c) Providing direction, policy guidance and support to representatives in the field and ensuring that their views are presented correctly at headquarters.

Section 13

Field representation

13.1 Each UNHCR country-level office is headed by the High Commissioner's representative (Statute, para. 16). The Representative acts on behalf of the High Commissioner in all aspects of UNHCR activities in the country(ies) to which he or she is accredited. The representative is accountable to the High Commissioner through the Director of the pertinent operations bureau.

13.2 The core functions of a representative are as follows:

(a) Promoting UNHCR objectives and maintaining relations with the Government, diplomatic missions, United Nations agencies, other intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and the media;

(b) Ensuring the protection of persons of concern to UNHCR through the Government's observance of the universally recognized principles of refugee protection and promoting accession to and, where applicable, compliance with the relevant international refugee instruments;

(c) Promoting durable solutions for persons of concern to UNHCR;

(d) Providing headquarters with comments on political, legal, social and economic developments in the countries to which he or she is accredited that are relevant to the work of UNHCR and assisting the High Commissioner in the formulation of policies concerning those countries.

Section 14

Division of Human Resources Management

14.1 The Division of Human Resources Management, which consists of the Director's Office, the Staff Services Section, the Recruitment and Vacancy Management Section, the Staff Development Section, the Field Staff Safety Section, the Policy and Planning Section, the Post Classification and Documentation Section, the Staff Welfare Unit and the Performance Management Unit, is headed by a Director who is accountable to the High Commissioner through the Deputy High Commissioner.

14.2 The core functions of the Division are as follows:

(a) Advising and assisting the High Commissioner in the formulation of personnel policies and management practices required to provide UNHCR with the necessary human resources;

(b) Directing the development and implementation of those policies and practices;

(c) Ensuring the application of the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and other relevant United Nations instructions relating to personnel matters;

(d) Assisting the High Commissioner in the optimum use of UNHCR human resources, inter alia, through the implementation of the UNHCR career management system;

(e) Advising, in consultation with the United Nations Security Coordinator, the High Commissioner on the security of UNHCR staff.

Section 15

Division of Operational Support

15.1 The Division of Operational Support, which consists of the Director's Office, the Funding and Donor Relations Service, the Programme Coordination Section, the Programme and Technical Support Section, the Supply and Transport Section and the Emergency Preparedness and Response Section, is headed by a Director who is accountable to the High Commissioner through the Deputy High Commissioner.

15.2 The core functions of the Division are as follows:

(a) Mobilization of the necessary financial and material resources in support of UNHCR activities;

(b) Provision of the necessary programme design and professional/technical support and the development of policies, standards, guidelines and operational arrangements;

(c) Ensuring overall programme coordination, including supporting and servicing the overall resource allocation function, monitoring/control and reporting.

Section 16

Division of Financial and Information Services

16.1 The Division of Financial and Information Services, which consists of the Controller's Office, Financial Services, the Information and Communication

Systems Section, the Archives, Records and Communications Unit, the Administration Unit and the Building Services Management Unit, is headed by a Director who is accountable to the High Commissioner through the Deputy High Commissioner.

16.2 The core functions of the Division are as follows:

(a) Advising and assisting the High Commissioner in the formulation of financial and budgetary policies;

(b) Ensuring proper arrangements for and financial and budgetary control of the collection, safe custody, investment, obligation, allocation and disbursement of all UNHCR funds;

(c) Developing and maintaining information systems that serve the entire organization;

(d) Ensuring control and effective management of assets, information and communication systems;

(e) Financial monitoring and analysis of and reporting on all UNHCR budgets and UNHCR post levels.

Section 17

Final provisions

17.1 The present bulletin shall enter into force on 1 June 1998.

17.2 Secretary-General's bulletin of 7 June 1996, entitled "Functions and organization of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees" (ST/SGB/Organization, section UNHCR), is hereby abolished.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN
Secretary-General